

EVERGLADES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Date: 1992 – 1996 (implementation over a 20-year period)

Organizational Structure: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the South Florida Water Management District coordinated with representatives from more than 30 federal, state, tribal and local agencies

Consensus:

Coordinated By: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Process:

Components: Development of a Comprehensive Plan (1992 – 1996) to restore and preserve south Florida's natural ecosystem (including the Everglades) while enhancing water supplies and maintaining flood protection. The Everglades is an important component of the south Florida ecosystem, serving as the primary source of fresh water from Lake Okeechobee to Florida Bay and providing essential habitat to many rare and endangered species.

The Plan addresses four fundamental issues: the quantity, quality, timing and distribution of water.

Quantity. Capture of fresh water in surface and underground storage areas including more than 217,000 acres of new reservoirs and wetland-based treatment areas and 300 underground aquifer storage and recovery wells; will ensure reliable, adequate supply of fresh water for the environment and urban/agricultural use.

Quality. Improve the quality of water discharged to natural areas by first directing it to surface storage reservoirs and wetland-based stormwater treatment areas and development of a comprehensive integrated water quality plan for the region.

Timing. Restoration of natural variations in water flows and water levels throughout the region to improve ecosystem function in the Water Conservation Areas, the Everglades and other wildlife management areas.

Distribution. Over 50% of the original Everglades have been lost to urban and agricultural development, resulting in fragmentation and

compartmentalization by canals and levees. The goal of the Plan is improve the connectivity of and to enhance overland flow through natural areas by the addition of bridges and culverts and removal of flow control structures.

Guiding Principles for the Comprehensive Plan:

- 1) objective is the restoration, preservation and protection of the south Florida ecosystem while providing for other water-related needs of the region;
- 2) based on the best available science, and independent scientific review as an integral part of the Plan development and implementation (utilizes an independent science advisory and peer review panel through the National Academy of Sciences);
- 3) developed through an inclusive and open process that engaged all stakeholders and interest groups;
- 4) all applicable federal, tribal, state and local agencies were full partners and their views were considered fully;
- 5) flexible Plan based on the concept of adaptive assessment – recognizing that modifications will be made in the future based on new information.